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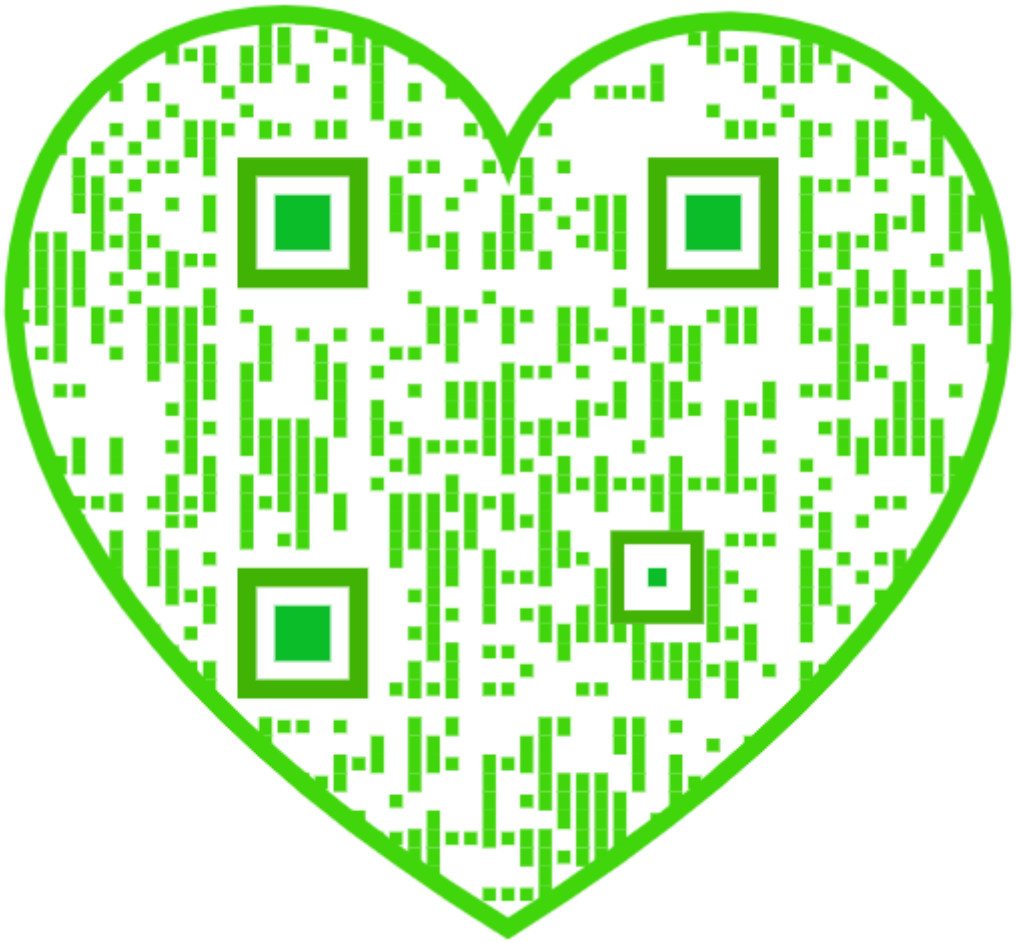
HOW TO DO IT.

BASKET MAKING

BOOK NUMBER ONE PRICE 25 CENTS



BASKET MAKING

BEING THE FIRST BOOK OF THE

HOW TO DO IT

SERIES

BY

T. VERNETTE MORSE

Illustrated with One Hundred and Six Working Designs.

CHICAGO.

ART CRAFT INSTITUTE.

1902.

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PREFACE.

A demand for lessons in basket weaving by mail, has led to the publishing of "Basket Making," which is the first of the "How To Do It" series of handbooks that is about to be published by the printing department of the Art Craft Institute.

These books will all be of uniform size and style, and will cover such subjects as Drawing, Designing, Phœnician Wood Carving and Pyrography, Metal work, Needle work and other arts that are taught in the Institute.

Each edition will be fully illustrated, and as concise as consistent with the nature of the subject. It is expected that these books will, to a certain extent, take the place of the correspondence course, although work will still be received for criticism, as it is quite impossible to meet every requirement of the students in any one book, or in fact any number of books.

The work is condensed to cover as large a field as possible, and the only excuse for its being, is, that it may assist those who are now struggling with the intricacies of basket making.

T. Vernette Morse.

Art Craft Institute.
26 Van Buren St.
Chicago Ill.

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Group of Raffia Baskets. *Plate I.*

BASKET MAKING.

"We learn things by doing them."

PART ONE.

Some fifty years ago basket making was considered a fairly paying occupation throughout the New England states, and it was not uncommon for basket weavers to travel through the country, making and selling their wares, often stopping for several days at farm houses, to make special baskets and bottom chairs. After the advent of machine made baskets the "basket man" became a thing of the past, and his handicraft forgotten.

During the past few years, the importance of teaching children how to apply their knowledge to practical things has renewed the industry and basket weaving has returned to us as an important factor in the promotion of education and industry.

MATERIALS.

The materials can be obtained at any reliable seed store or basket factory. They consist of reed, numbered from 1 to 8, according to the size. Number 1 is the smallest, about the size of a large knitting needle. Number 8 the largest size. For small baskets numbers 2, 3, and 5 are mostly used, but for large work the other numbers are preferable. The split and flat reed is more pliable than the round and more easily managed.

The flat and braided rush makes very strong baskets, and combines readily with the reed.

The flat splints, which are much used by the Indians, are most desirable in making very light baskets.

Raffia is a long palm grass imported from Madagascar. It is almost the color and texture of corn husks, except that it is more pliable when wet. It is easily handled, and lends itself to a great variety of weaves. Other material such as wood ribbon, both white and colored, sweet grass, corn husks, common cat tail leaves, or wheat straw, may be used with very fair results if desired. We will devote this chapter to the weaving of reed baskets only.

TOOLS.

No tools are required except a pair of medium sized shears, a sharp knife, a paper of No. 19 needles, a yard stick and a large knitting needle.

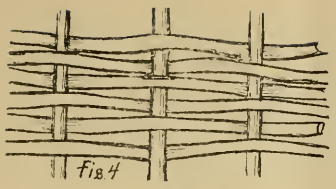


Fig. 4

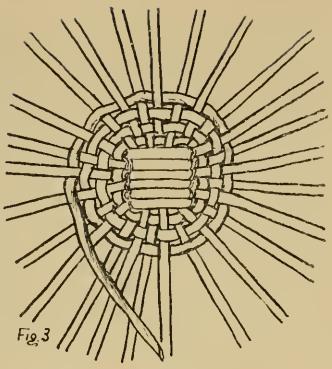


Fig. 3

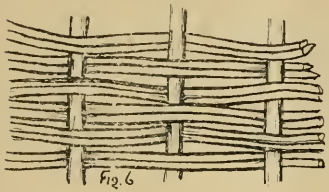


Fig. 6

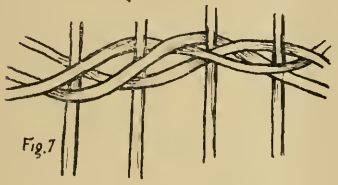


Fig. 7

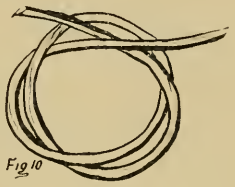


Fig. 10

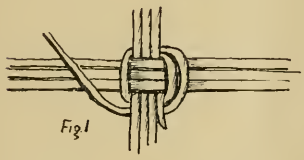


Fig. 1

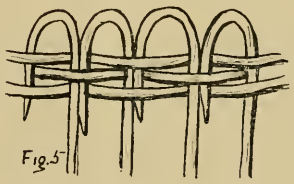


Fig. 5

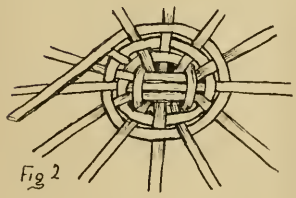


Fig. 2

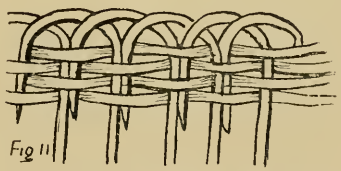


Fig. 11

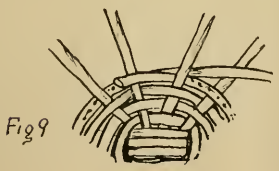


Fig. 9

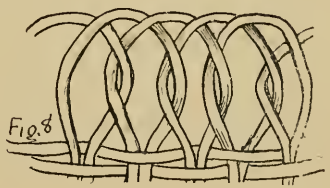


Fig. 8

TERMS.

The ribs or upright pieces in a basket are called the *Spokes*, and should be from one to two sizes larger than the filler. The filler is wound in and out between these spokes and is known as the *Weaver*. When one weaver is used, it is known as *Under and Over* weaving (see Fig. 4). When two weavers are used in under and over weaving as in Fig. 6 it is known as *Double weaving*. When two weavers are used as in Fig. 12 it is *Pairing*. When three weavers are used as in Fig. 7 it is known as the *Triple Twist*.

AMOUNT OF MATERIAL.

The average amount of material required for a reed basket, may be estimated by measuring across the bottom of the basket and its height. The spokes should be long enough to extend up both sides of the basket and across the bottom. If the basket is small, the bottom should be commenced as in Fig. 1; if the basket is large, it should have more spokes (see Fig. 3). If the bottom of the basket is four inches in diameter and four inches high, it will require six spokes twelve inches long and one spoke 7 inches long. For weavers it will require 9 or 10 times as much material as for the spokes. The spokes should be at least one size larger than the weavers.

First prepare the reed by allowing it to soak for twenty minutes in hot water. If it is necessary to use cold water let the reed remain in it for an hour or more; or until it becomes soft and pliable.

For a basket 5 inches in diameter and 5 inches deep, cut 6 pieces of No. 4 reed 19 inches long and 1 piece 10 inches long; cross the pieces and bind them together as in Fig. 1, add the extra spoke by forcing it between the crossed center just where the end of the weaver starts. (The weaver should be of No. 3 reed.) Now weave in and out until the bottom is five inches across. Put the basket in water and let it soak a few minutes, press it well between the hands until it lies smooth and flat, turn the spokes up gently and commence to weave the sides (see Fig. 4). When the sides are five inches deep turn the spokes in at the top and let them slide in by the side of the spokes as in Fig. 11 or 5. For this basket two weavers may be used for the sides as in Fig. 6. The top may be finished as in Fig. 7 or 8. Fig. 9 illustrates how to splice the weaver. Fig. 10 is a knot which may be used as a handle, by slipping the ends down by the side of the spokes as in Fig 5, and fastening them securely by slipping them in between the weavers, on the same principle as the splicing in Fig. 9. Use a knitting needle to press the weavers apart.

Variety may be given to this style of basket by using two weavers as in Fig. 12. The advantage of using two weavers is, that it only requires an even number of spokes; commencing the basket as in Fig. 1 and dividing the spokes evenly.

Care should be taken in all basket weaving to divide the spokes evenly, and to be sure that the bottom lies flat, for therein lies much of the symmetry of the finished article.

DESCRIPTION of WORKING DESIGNS

The higher the ideal, the more beautiful the work.

PART TWO

The working designs which are used to illustrate this book were made directly from the baskets as they were woven in the classes at the Art Craft Institute.

Each step is explained as thoroughly as possible, and by carefully following the directions almost any one can learn to make a basket.

FIG. 1 shows the placing of the spokes and the fastening of the weaver. Draw the weaver up close and snug, so the spokes will be firmly fixed in place.

FIG. 2 is the same as FIG. 1 except that it illustrates how to insert the extra spoke and the manner in which the single weaver should be used.

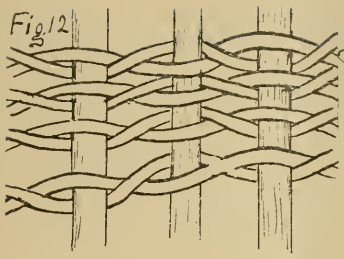


Fig. 12

Fig. 17

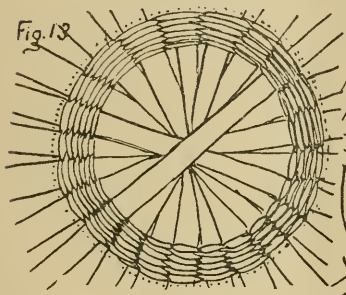


Fig. 13

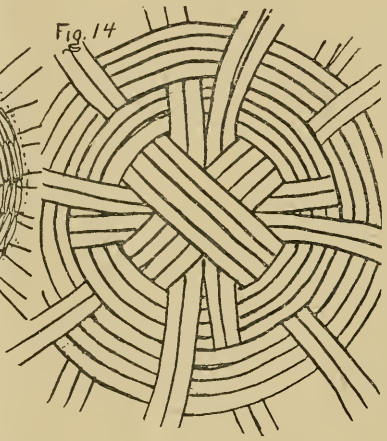


Fig. 14

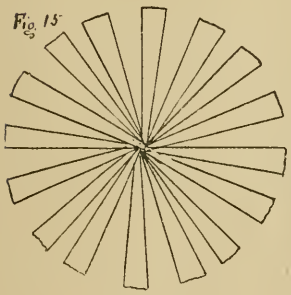


Fig. 15

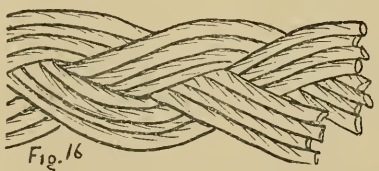


Fig. 16

FIG. 3 is for a large basket, having twelve spokes instead of six. The spokes are bound together with a piece of raffia before the weaving is commenced. The raffia is wound around the spokes on the right, crossed over the six spokes underneath and wound around the same spoke on the left; add another spoke, fasten it at the left side first, by passing the raffia underneath as before and wrapping it around the same spoke on the right side; repeat this until all of the spokes are securely fastened in place. When the twelfth spoke is firmly secured, and the extra spoke in place, (see upper right hand corner of illustration), fasten the weaver and commence the over and under weave. When the bottom is of the required size, wet thoroughly, press between the hands as already described, and turn the spokes up gently over the finger. If the sides of the basket are to be perpendicular, the spokes should be made to stand up straight by holding the weaver very firm. If the sides of the basket are to flare, allow the spokes to remain in that position and use the weaver accordingly.

FIG. 4 illustrates the over and under weave as it appears in the sides of a basket.

FIG. 5, 8, and 11 illustrate the different manner in which the spokes may be interwoven at the top of the basket to form borders.

FIG. 6 is the over and under weave the same as in FIG. 4, except that two reeds are used in place of one.

Fig. 18

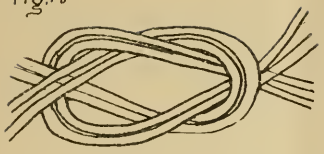


Fig. 19

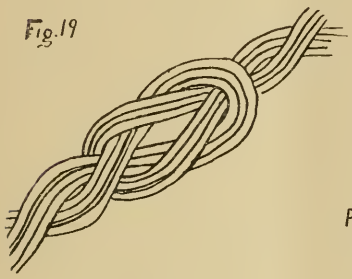


Fig. 20

Fig. 21

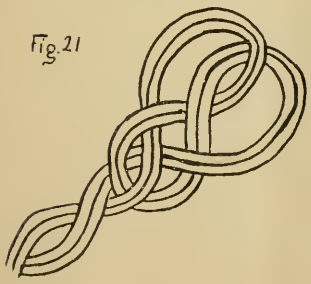


Fig. 25

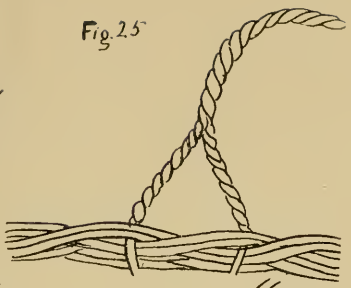


Fig. 22

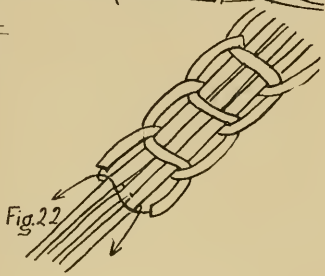


Fig. 23

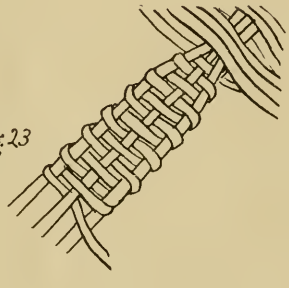


Fig. 24

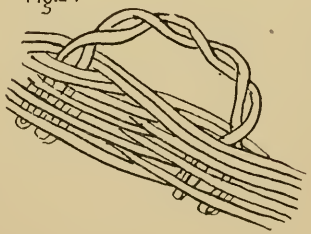


FIG. 7 illustrates the manner of weaving the twist, when three weavers are used. This style of weave is useful to finish the top of a basket, and is frequently used at the bottom of large baskets when extra strength is required.

FIG. 9 shows manner of splicing the weavers.

FIG. 10 is a knot that may be used for a handle or to lift up the top of a basket. It should be fastened to basket, by inserting the ends of the reed between the spokes and pressing them outward to follow the line of the weaver.

FIG. 12 illustrates pairing, by the use of two weavers. This weave is extremely satisfactory when it is desirable to entirely cover the spokes.

FIG. 13 is an arrangement of red splints for the bottom of a round basket, woven together with raffia of the same color. The pairing weave is used. Turn the spokes at the dotted line, and weave the sides in the same manner. Sweet grass or rush may be used in place of the raffia if preferred.

FIG. 14 is an arrangement of reed for the bottom of a round basket. The size of the basket will determine the number of times the spokes are to be divided. When the spokes have been divided until but one is left, another or even two may be added. The beauty of the basket is greatly enhanced by using three spokes, with the over and under weave for the sides. The edge of this basket may be finished in any desired style.

FIG. 15 is a center for a round basket formed by trimming the spokes until they are very narrow where

they cross in the middle. The side spokes should be all of one width. Any style of weave may be used for this basket.

FIG. 16 is a braid made by grouping four reeds in three different strands and braiding them together. It may be used for a handle, or for any other purpose that suggests itself.

FIG. 17 is a twist made by weaving three reeds into the edge of the basket at the top, by placing the weavers behind three consecutive spokes. Pass the first weaver over two spokes and under the top weavers, then the second and third in the same manner; repeat this process until the edge is finished.

FIG. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 are illustrations of knots, braids, and weaves, suitable for handles and other accessories.

FIG. 24 is made of two reeds twisted together, when thoroughly soaked, and attached to the basket as illustrated for side handles.

FIG. 25 is made by twisting four reeds together and separating them into two parts, just above the place where they are joined to the basket. Join to basket as shown in illustration.

FIG. 26 illustrates a plain weave of splints, or reed, for the bottom of a square basket. The spokes are to be turned up at the dotted lines for the sides. The sides are woven in the over and under weave. This bottom is the one used in all the splint baskets, and will not be referred to again.

FIG. 27 is an attractive side pattern made by passing the weaver over two spokes and under one.

FIG. 28 is a plain bottom, but every other spoke is split down to the point where the sides turn, for the purpose of forming a fancy side weave.

FIG. 29 is a side pattern, made by using split reed or splint as illustrated in Fig. 28. Both wide and narrow weavers are used for this design.

FIG. 30 is an attractive side weave made by using braids of colored raffia for weavers in place of the splints. An entire basket may be made by using the braids for weavers.

FIG. 31 illustrates the manner in which the edge of a basket should be finished, and the method of inserting the handle. Turn the spokes over at the top (after the last weaver has been put in place) in opposite directions. Insert the handle as shown in design. Take two weavers that will reach around the top of the basket; place one inside, and the other so as to hold the bent spokes firmly in place; with a narrow splint or small reed bind these together.

FIG. 32 has a bottom same as in FIG 26. Side weavers are of narrow splints. The decorative design at the top and bottom is made by using an extra weaver of another color, passing it under 1, giving two turns to the right, passing it beneath 2, again turning it twice to the right and passing it beneath 3, two turns to the right and pass beneath 4, repeat this around the entire basket, and it will form a row of diagonal, raised squares which are decidedly ornamental. The top is finished same as FIG. 31.

Fig 26

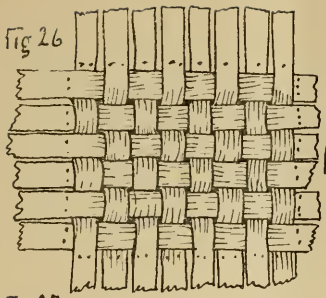


Fig. 27

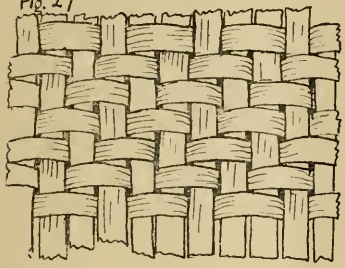


Fig. 29

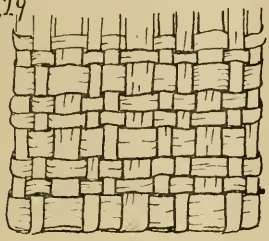


Fig. 28

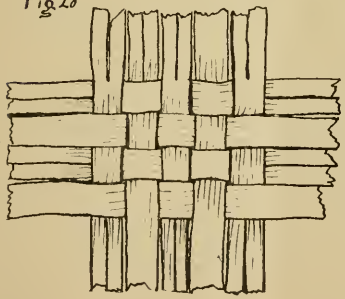


Fig. 31

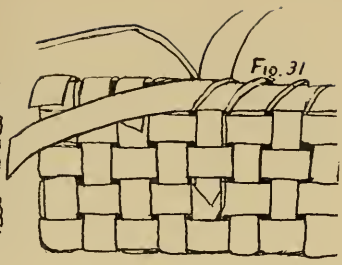


Fig 30

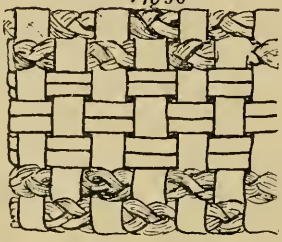


Fig 32

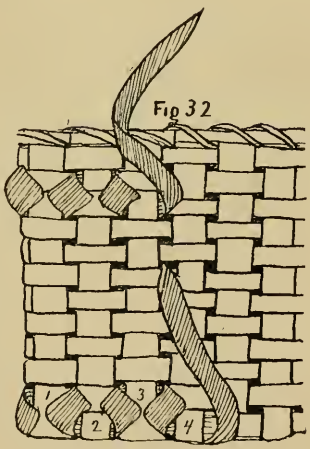


FIG. 33 is a plain splint basket strengthened at the top, bottom, and near the bottom, by placing a split reed over the weaver after it is in place, and binding them both together with a narrow splint.

FIG. 34, 35, 36, 37 and 38 illustrate the variety that may be given to the sides of a basket by the use of different colored weavers.

FIG. 39 is the ordinary lattice weave, made by crossing the spokes in diamond shape.

FIG. 40 and 41 is an effect made by winding the weaver with colored raffia before it is used. In the illustration given, blue splint was used for the bottom of the basket and the spokes. The weaver was of red splint wound with the natural colored raffia (see FIG. 40). While this combination of color is most effective, any other harmomous color scheme will answer the purpose as well.

FIG. 42, 43 and 44 illustrate three methods of grouping the spokes, by placing the weavers some distance apart, on the inside of the spokes, then binding the whole together with a reed of another color as shown in the illustration.

These designs are especially appropriate made of large reed for waste paper and other strong open work baskets.

Fig. 37

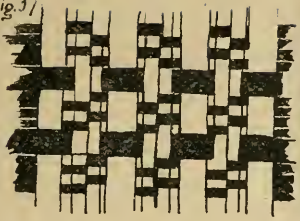
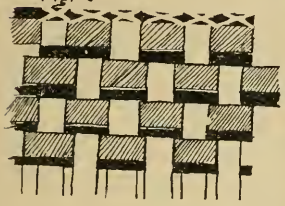


Fig. 38



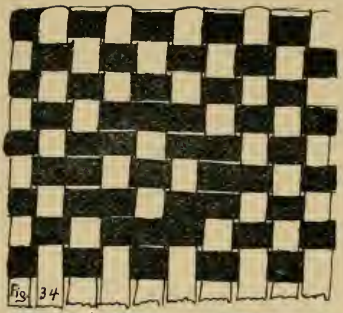


Fig. 34

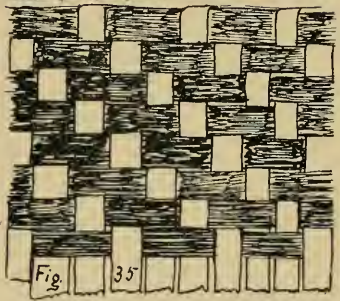
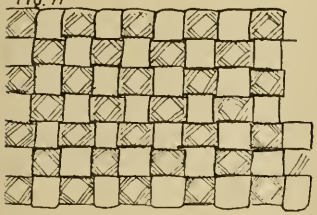


Fig. 35

Fig. 40

Fig. 41



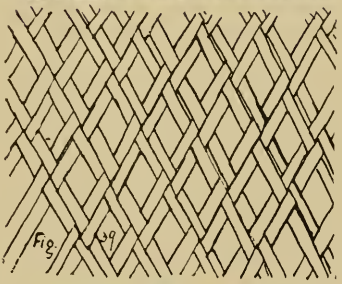
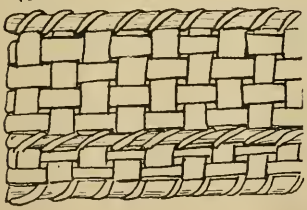


Fig. 39

Fig. 33



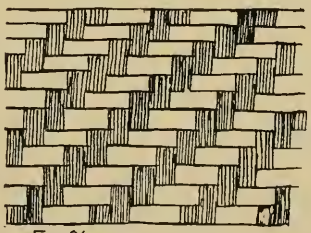


Fig. 36

DESCRIPTION OF RAFFIA DESIGNS.

"Art is the mother of all creative forms."

PART THREE.

Commencing with the next illustration we give a series of examples in which the raffia, both white and colored plays a most important prrt.

This strong flexible fiber, has no equal as an all around material for baskets. It is so easily managed that the merest child can form it into something beautiful, while there is really no limit to its possibilites in the hands of an experienced artist.

Fig. 45, 46 and 47 illustrate the very first step in the making of raffia baskets. First wet the raffia. Thread one strand in a number 19 tapestry needle. Take several strands of the raffia (the number will depend on the size of the coil you wish to make.) Thirty strands will make a very large coil, while in the very fine baskets but three or four are used. Commence at the end of the coil of raffia as in Fig. 45, and wind it with the strand of raffia that is

threaded in the needle, turn as in FIG. 46 and insert the needle through the stitches that were made in Fig. 45, bring the needle up through the stitch, wrap the raffia around the coil once and pass the needle through the next stitch, continue this until you have worked twice times around the center, then any desired stitch may be used. Widen the center so it will lie flat, by increasing the number of stitches whenever necessary.

In all raffia baskets reed may be used in place of raffia for the coil.

FIG. 48 is for the center of an oblong basket.

FIG. 49 is another method of starting the center. This weave is also suitable for handles as by its means, several reeds may be woven together.

FIG. 50 and 51 illustrate the manner of making the ordinary raffia center. Thread one strand of the raffia in the needle, wind it around the coil to hold the loose strands of raffia in place, pass it under the preceding coil, out on the right side, thence over both coils, and again over the coil of loose raffia. Repeat this until the bottom of the basket is of the desired size. Allow every stitch to pass over two coils, making a bridge that holds the coils together. To widen the circle so it will lie flat, put two stitches in place of one as before mentioned.

FIG. 52 is the same as the preceding except that the long stitches, or bridges, are inserted directly through the center of the coil each time, instead of passing entirely over it.

When two colors are used, the strand that is not in use is allowed to become part of the coil and is

thus covered by the stitches, as the coil becomes smaller add more raffia, so that it shall be of uniform size throughout the basket.

FIG. 53 is known as the rice stitch. In this instance the working strand of raffia is wound around the coil but once, bringing it through the stitch just below from the back side.

FIG. 54 is the buttom hole stitch made by passing the raffia over the reed or coil, putting it through the stitch beneath, bringing it up on the under side, and passing it through its own thread, thus forming a loop at the top in which to insert the next stitch.

FIG. 55 is an open work design made the same as the button hole except that the needle is passed through and around each loop three times, leaving an open space.

FIG. 56 the knot stitch is made exactly like the one in Fig. 50 except that the bridge is crossed by the raffia in the center, as shown in the illustration.

FIG. 57 is the same as the bridges used in Fig. 50 every other stitch passing over two reeds or coils. In this basket a reed should be used for the coil.

FIG. 58, 59, 62 and 63 are coiled in button hole stitch over number 8 reed. The designs are worked out by using two or even three colors, according taste.

FIG. 60 is coiled over raffia and woven with five colors. The black squares as illustrated are made of black raffia; the crossed square in the diamond is of

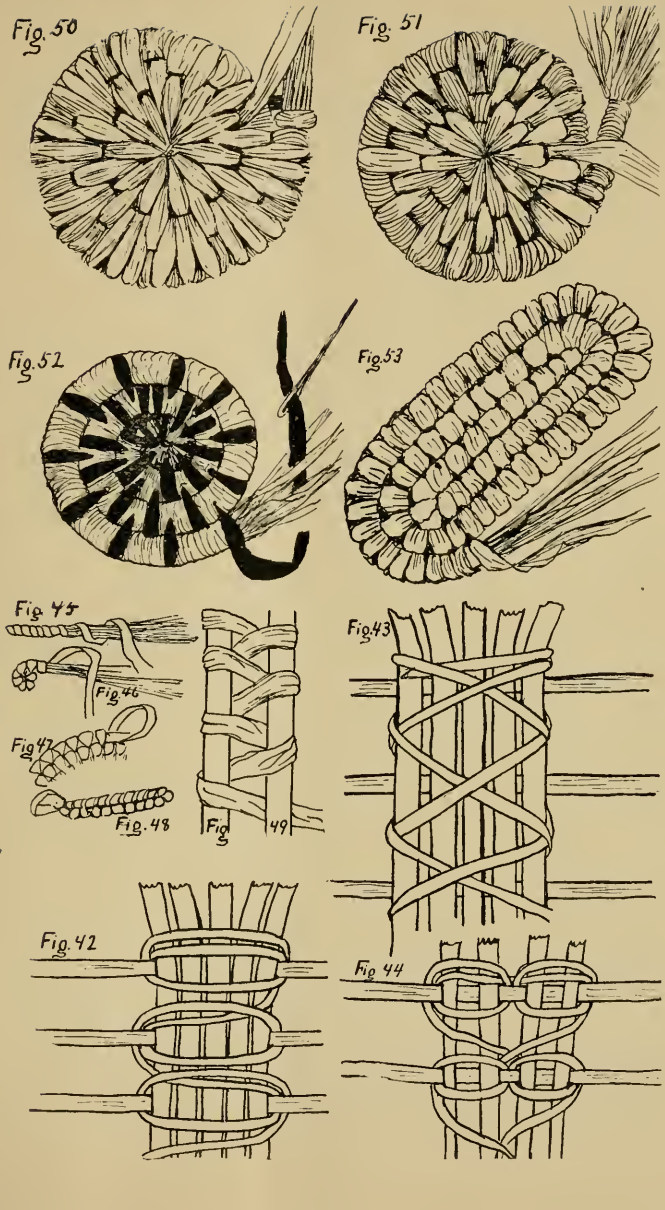


Fig. 50
Fig. 51
Fig. 52
Fig. 53
Fig. 45
Fig. 46
Fig. 47
Fig. 48
Fig. 49
Fig. 43
Fig. 42
Fig. 44

orange raffia; the white squares are of green; the square having a line through the center is of the natural color. Any other harmonious combination of color may be used in place of those given.

FIG. 61 has spokes of reed, with weavers of split reed placed back of them in groups and the whole bound together with colored raffia.

FIG. 64 is the same as the foregoing except that the spokes are placed close together, and the weavers oneinch apart.

FIG. 65, 66 and 67 shows three side weaves in different stitches. Raffia is used for the weaver in the pairing weave. The weavers are pressed close together entirely covering the spokes both inside and out. A great variety may be given to these baskets by the use of colored raffia.

FIG. 68 is the same as the foregoing except that the raffia is twisted twice between each spoke, and the weavers are placed one half inch apart, forming a pretty open work design which is very effective when lined with colored silk.

FIG. 69 is best made over a form, and is generally used for covering bottles, etc. The weavers are of coiled raffia held together by a lattice work of raffia.

FIG. 70 may be woven in two ways, either the raffia or the reed being used for the weaver. The group of reed used in this basket is no. 1 woven together with one strand of raffia,

FIG. 71 has spokes of no. 8 reed, it differs from the others of similar weave, as the weaver in this instance is placed outside of the spokes, and the two are then bound together with raffia.

Fig. 57

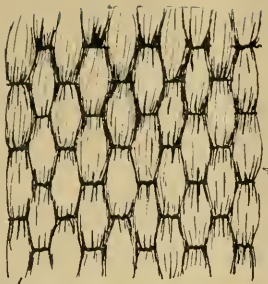


Fig. 54

Fig. 55

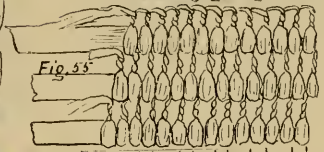


Fig. 58

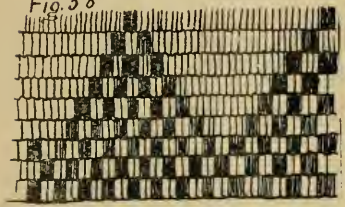


Fig. 61

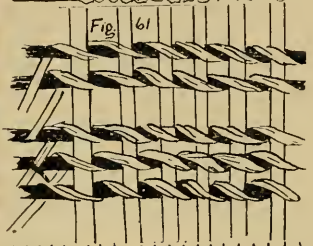


Fig. 56

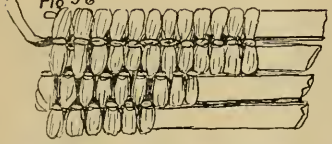


Fig. 62

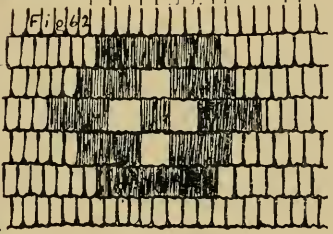


Fig. 59

Fig. 60

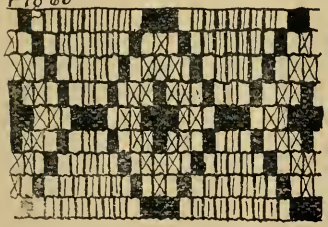


Fig. 63.

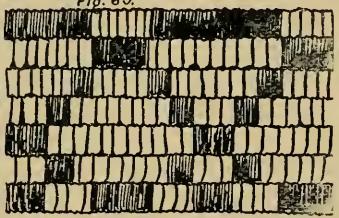


FIG. 72 is a design taken from an old Indian basket in which two stitches were combined. The design as given here, is worked in the same manner as Fig. 53, in black, on a ground of red.

FIG. 73 is another design taken from a modern Indian basket. It is worked out in the same stitch at the preceding.

FIG. 74, and 76 are coiled baskets made in rice stitch. (see Fig. 53) The design is made by using the bridge stitch as shown in the illustration.

FIG. 75 is of reed wound with the raffia held in position by the bridge stitch arranged as in the illustration.

FIG. 77 and 78 are braids made of raffia, the first is useful for a great variety of purposes, while the second is most desirable for handles.

FIG. 79 is a mat made of braid as in Fig. 77 sewed together with a strand of raffia.

FIG. 80 is the side of a basket made of braids sewed together.

FIG. 82 is an illustration of the manner in which a wide braid of the raffia may be made. These braids may be sewn together for porch pillows or covers for chairs. They are most effective when several colors are used.

Fig 64

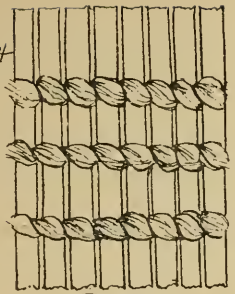


Fig 65

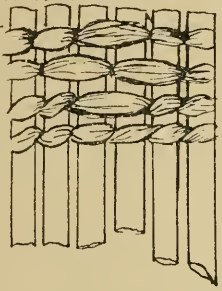


Fig 66

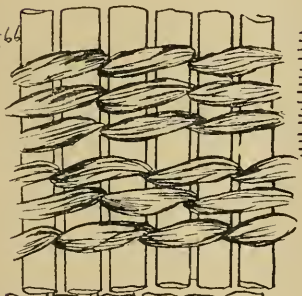


Fig 67

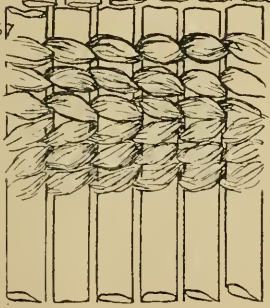


Fig 68

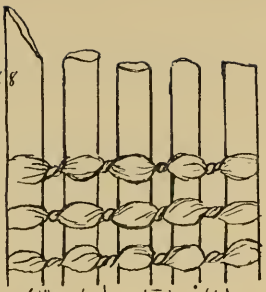


Fig 69

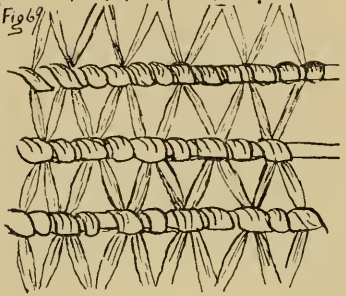


Fig 70

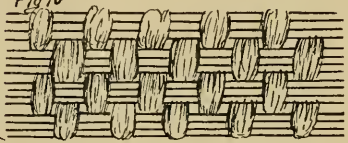
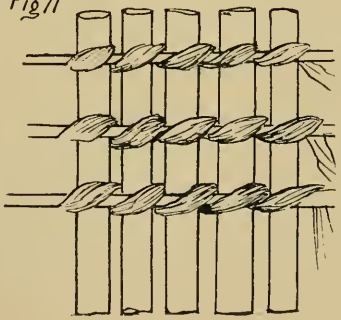


Fig 71



DESCRIPTION of HALF-TONE ILLUSTRATIONS.

PART FOUR.

"It is not what you do, but how you do it, that counts."

PLATE I.

This group of baskets is deftly handled and well designed.

FIG. 1 has a dark base and top, while the center is of natural colored raffia in which a colored design is effectively introduced.

FIG. 2, 4, 5, 9 and 10 are of raffia, woven over reed.

FIG. 3 is of raffia woven over reed, the design being especially attractive.

FIG. 6 and 8 are large, somewhat flat baskets, of coiled raffia, perfectly designed.

FIG. 7 is a woven cover for a bottle made of coiled raffia joined with the bridge stitch.

FIG. 10, 11 and 12 are similar in style and weave to the foregoing.

FIG. 16 shows a long distance between the bridge stitches which hold the coils together. The design is wrought out entirely by winding the coil between the bridges with different colors.

FIG 13 and 14 have stripes formed by winding the coil of raffia with one color and using for the bridges raffia of a contrasting color.

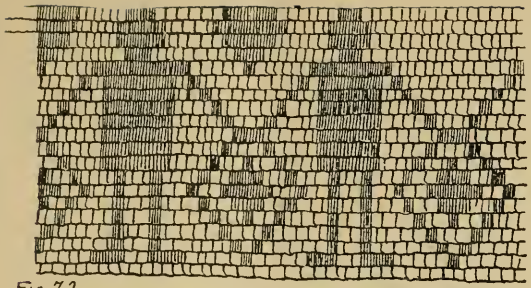


Fig 72

Fig 73

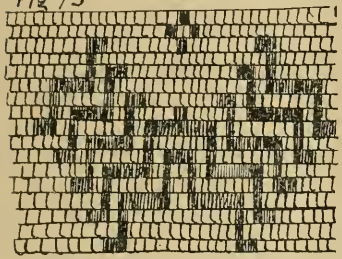
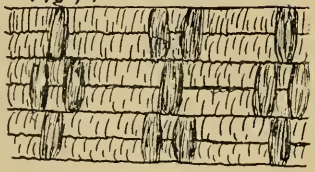


Fig 74



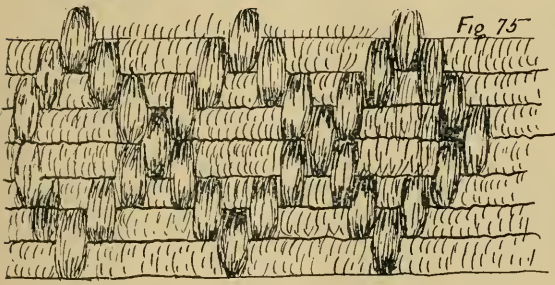


Fig 75

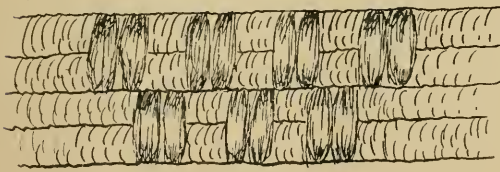


Fig 76

PLATE II.

FIG. 1 is a basket of raffia coiled in two colors. The edge is made by looping the coil a trifle between the bridges.

FIG. 2 is a reed basket having rounded sides; the bottom and opening at the top being of equal size. The cover is made separate, somewhat rounded and fastened to the basket with a raffia hinge.

FIG. 3 is a coiled raffia basket, made in dark colors ornamented with a diamond pattern.

FIG. 4 is a basket of raffia exceedingly graceful in form, and artistic in design. The cover is made to fit tightly over the top.

FIG. 5 is a photograph frame made of raffia over cardboard.

FIG. 6 is a basket of raffia made in the usual bridge stitch, having a design in two colors and handles at the side.

FIG. 7 is made over number 3 reed in knot stitch.

FIG. 8 has bottom and spokes of pink splints, woven together in the pairing weave, with small braids of sweet grass: The legs are made separate, in the same manner as the body of the basket and fastened to it after it is finished.

FIG. 9 is a handkerchief pocket made by using heavy linen thread for the spokes and raffia for the pairing weave. Handle of braided raffia.

FIG. 11 is a covered basket made of coiled raffia with half round cover.

FIG. 12 is of coiled raffia in bridge stitch.

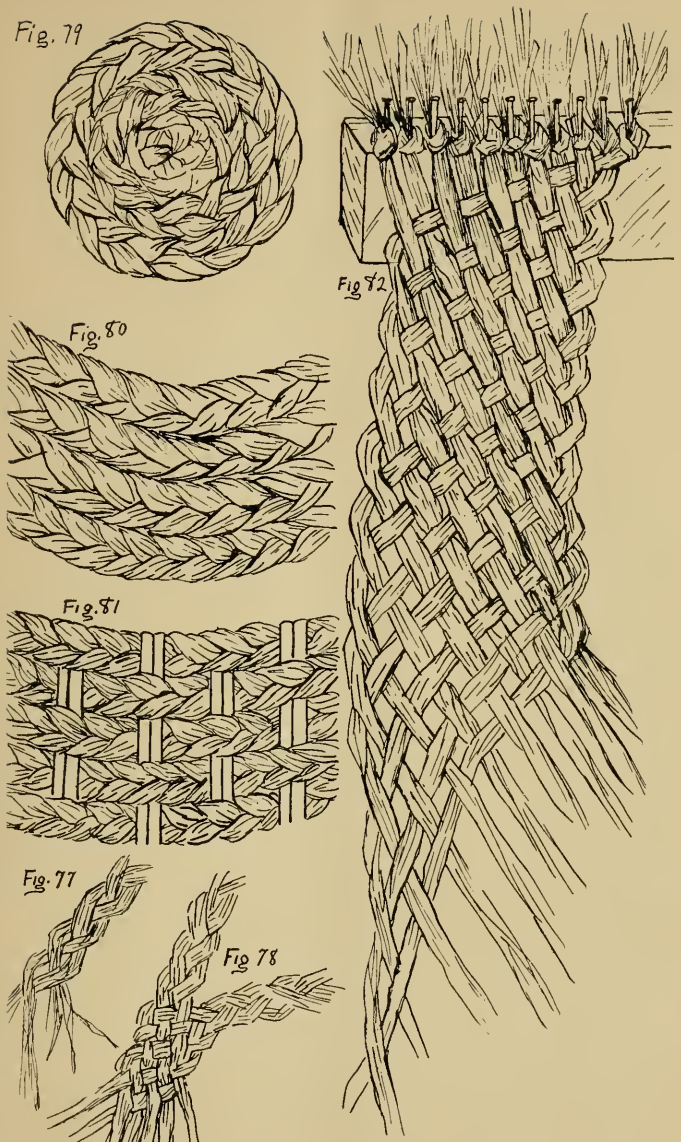


Fig. 79
Fig. 82
Fig. 80
Fig. 81
Fig. 77
Fig. 78

PLATE III

This group shows a variety of styles as there are no two baskets alike.

FIG. 1 - Basket of raffia, made in button hole stitch over number 3 reed, handle of reeds woven together same as in Fig. 13.

FIG. 2 - Basket of raffia drawn tightly over a frame made of number 8 reed.

FIG. 3 - Basket of raffia made in bridge stitch over number 8 reed, Hoop handles of reed wound witn raffia.

FIG. 4 - Candy basket made of reed and raffia with fancy top of colored raffia.

FIG. 5 is a basket of raffia having a design formed by using a colored coil held together with bridges of a contrasting color,

FIG. 6 is a combination of the knot stitch and coiled raffia.

FIG. 7 is woven with number 3 reed in double weave.

FIG. 8 has spokes of splint with braids of raffia for weavers.

FIG. 9 is an exceedingly fine basket made wholly of raffia in button hole stitch.

FIG. 10 is another very fine basket which cannot be photographed to any advantaget as it is made of raffia in rice stitch.

FIG. 11 is of fine raffia in the usual bridge stitch.

Group of Raffia Baskets. *Plate II.*

Group of Baskets *Plate III.*

NOTE.

Although the material for baskets may be obtained in a great variety of colors, it is sometimes desirable to stain some part, or the whole, of a basket after it is finished. For this purpose the Art Craft Institute uses a line of specially prepared dyes, and will send the complete list to any address on application.

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